



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

# Yerevan Times

## AMERICANS CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



On November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation establishing an official holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., the 1964 Nobel Peace laureate and the individual most associated with the triumphs of the Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. By 1999, all 50 states observed the holiday.

Americans on each third Monday of January honor the life and achievements of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., (1929–1968). As a political organizer, supremely skilled orator and advocate of nonviolent protest, King was pivotal in persuading his fellow Americans to end the legal segregation that prevailed throughout the South and parts of other regions, and in sparking support for the civil rights legislation that established the legal framework for racial equality in the United States.

Read more on Martin Luther King Jr at: <http://www.america.gov/>

## WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY HONORS FIRST PRESIDENT

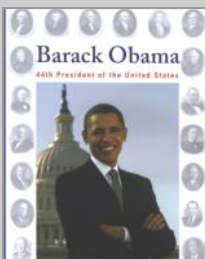
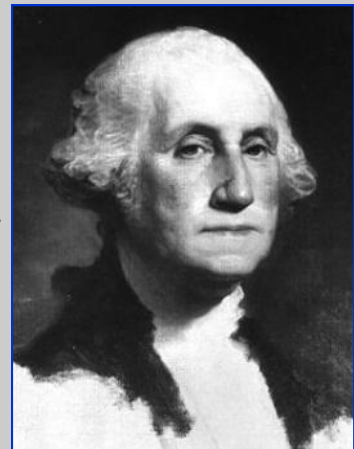
The February 16 birthday of George Washington, military leader of the American Revolution and first president of the United States, has been an official holiday since 1885. As a number of states also celebrated the February 12 birthday of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president, some legislators advo-

cated combining the two events into a single holiday. The final legislation retained Washington's birthday holiday, but many Americans now call the holiday "Presidents' Day."

Americans long have honored George Washington, commander of the United States armies in the War of Independence, first president of the United States, and "first in the hearts of his countrymen."

During the Revolutionary War, Washington's small band of soldiers faced a well-equipped professional army, but he led his often ragged forces to victory in the face of incredible hardships.

Washington enjoyed nearly universal respect, not least for spurning all offers of political power at the moment of his military triumph (1781), choosing instead to return to his Mount Vernon, Virginia, farm. The drafters of the new Constitution in 1787 were willing to afford the executive branch greater powers because they anticipated that Washington, who could be counted on not to abuse his office, would serve as the chief executive, and would establish important precedents for his successors.



## Barack Obama; 44th President of the United States

Barack Obama, elected the 44th President of the United States, has lived a truly American life, and has opened a new chapter in American politics. This publication tells the story of Obama's life, describes how he captured the presidency, and portrays his vision for the future. It also introduces readers to the Obama family and to the new Vice President, Joseph Biden.

All educational establishments, NGOs, and libraries that are interested in obtaining a copy of this publication should contact the IRC at: [ircyerevan@usa.am](mailto:ircyerevan@usa.am) or via phone: 49-44-11 or 49-42-65

### **What is the presidential oath of office?**

The Constitution spelled out the presidential oath of office, the only official oath it set down in detail. The oath, usually administered by the chief justice of the United States on inauguration day, reads simply, *"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."* The president-elect may choose either swear or affirm, as some religious sects prohibit swearing. Only Franklin Pierce has used affirm (1853).

### **How is the executive branch organized?**

The president heads the executive branch. Under the president are the vice president, the Executive Office of the president (including the White House Office, Office of Management and Budget, and National Security Council), and the fourteen executive departments. Also considered part of the executive branch are dozens of independent regulatory agencies, such as the Federal Communications Commission. These agencies usually are headed by a bipartisan board or commission and are not under the president's direct control. Similarly, government corporations, such as the U.S. Postal Service, are considered part of the executive branch, though they also operate independently of the president.

### **How are judges and ambassadors chosen?**

As with other top government officials, the president recruits and nominates potential judges and ambassadors. The Senate then approves or rejects the appointees.

While the president may participate directly in selecting Supreme Court nominees, the attorney general and the Justice Department generally recruit nominees for federal appeals and distinct court judgeship. Also, according to an informal rule known as "senatorial courtesy," a potential nominee who will serve a local district may be rejected by a senator from that state, if the senator belongs to the president's party. Senatorial courtesy can also be invoked to delay action on a nomination.

### **Where can presidential papers and speeches be found?**

Papers of the most recent presidents are easiest to find. The Government Printing Office has published a series called Public Papers of Presidents of the United States since Hoover. In addition, eleven recent presidents have or soon will have special libraries to house their papers. The eleven libraries and their Web sites are:

Herbert Hoover- West Branch, Iowa (<http://hoover.nara.gov>)

Franklin D. Roosevelt- Hyde Park, N.Y. ([www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu))

Harry S. Truman- Independence, Mo. ([www.trumanlibrary.org](http://www.trumanlibrary.org))

Dwight D. Eisenhower- Abilene, Kan. ([www.eisenhower.utexas.edu](http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu))

John F. Kennedy- Boston, Mass. ([www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary](http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary))

Lyndon B. Johnson- Austin, Texas ([www.lbjlib.utexas.edu](http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu))

Richard M. Nixon- College Park, Md. (<http://metalab.unc.edu/lia/president/nixon.html>)

Gerald R. Ford- Ann Arbor, Mich. ([www.ford.utexas.edu](http://www.ford.utexas.edu))

Jimmy Carter- Atlanta, Ga. ([carterlibrary.galileo.peachnet.edu](http://carterlibrary.galileo.peachnet.edu))

Ronald Reagan- Simi Valley, Calif. ([www.reagan.utexas.edu](http://www.reagan.utexas.edu))

George Bush- College Station, Texas

([www.csd1.tamu.edu/bushlib](http://www.csd1.tamu.edu/bushlib))

William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum, Little Rock, Arkansas (<http://www.clintonlibrary.gov/>)

Papers and speeches of earlier presidents are reprinted in various collections of official papers, including A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, published by the Government Printing Office.

### **The Clinton Presidential Library and Museum**



Is located within the Clinton Presidential Center and Park. The Center includes

the Clinton Foundation (Little Rock office) and the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service.

The archival and museum holdings at the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum are the largest within the Presidential Library system.

Included in these collections are approximately 76.8 million pages of paper documents, 1.85 million photographs and over 84,600 museum artifacts. Official records, as well as donated materials, will be made available to researchers.

In addition to the archival collection and research facilities, the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum features exhibits, special events, and educational programs. The museum includes replicas of the Oval Office and the Cabinet Room. Permanent exhibits utilize documents, photographs, videos and interactive stations.

# What's New at The American Corners?

## IN VANADZOR: GENDER EQUALITY SEMINAR

On December 23, 2008, the Vanadzor AC organized a seminar on gender equality. Youth Action Club (YAC) member Satenik Papyan, Andrea Hendrickson (Peace Corps volunteer) and Ilias Vrochidis (Greece) presented the concept of gender and its understanding and functioning in various cultural environments (Armenia, U.S. and Greece). Participants discussed the roles of men and women in everyday life, their opportunities for attaining an education, securing employment and participating in social life and politics, and the role of culture in shaping the stereotypes of men and women and their behavior.

## IN GYUMRI: AMERICAN CORNER ORGANIZES ENGLISH CLASSES FOR YOUTH

Representatives of the American Corner in Gyumri, along with U.S. Peace Corps volunteer Elizabeth Alan, have initiated English classes for children. The classes are held every Tuesday. Children between the ages of 9 and 11 have the opportunity to have fun while strengthening their knowledge of English through games and activities.

The first class was held on December 2, 2008. The children were very excited to practice asking questions to their friends. Later, they divided into groups and worked on small dialogues that Elizabeth prepared for them. Gyumri American Corner English Club members also participated in the class.



## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AMERICAN & ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

On December 25, 2008, JFDP Alumna Gayane Grigoryan gave a public lecture on the "Differences between American and Armenian Christmas and New Year." Gayane talked about how Americans celebrate Christmas, mentioning traditions and typical gifts. During her presentation, she also discussed Christmas and New Year's traditions in Armenia.

## IN YEREVAN: THE ART OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



On December 13, 2008, the Yerevan American Corner, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy, organized a public lecture in the framework of "Americans at the American Corner." The guest speaker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy in Europe and Eurasia, Colleen Graffy, delivered a dynamic lecture entitled "Inside the U.S. State Department."

Assistant Public Affairs Officer Susan Bridenstine introduced the DAS to a large audience of students, teachers, NGO members and U.S. government-funded exchange program alumni. During her 30 minute presentation, DAS Graffy covered many aspects of the art of public diplomacy. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Graffy spoke about exchange programs, and various types of diplomacy, including sports and green diplomacy.

Over 50 people participated in the lecture. At the end of the program, a lively discussion took place. The audience members asked many questions about American-Armenian relations. DAS Graffy recorded many of the questions and comments to post on YouTube.





## Information Resource Center



### VISIT IRC FRIENDS AND PATRONS GROUP AT FACEBOOK

In December 2008, IRC Yerevan and American Corners Armenia launched their Facebook web pages. IRC Yerevan Friends and Patrons, American Corners Armenia, American Corner Gyumri and Kapan American Corner groups have been created for patrons and friends. Patrons introduce themselves, discuss IRC and American Corner programs and activities, and share their comments and suggestions.

Facebook is the most popular social networking site in many English-speaking countries. Facebook is a popular, free-access social networking website.

Like other social network services, Facebook focuses on building online

communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others.

Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services. Popular methods now combine many of these, with MySpace and Facebook being the most widely used in North America. There are many other services available like Nexopia, Bebo, Hi5, Tagged, Xing, Skyrock, Orkut, Friendster, Xiaonei and Cyworld in America, Europe, Asia and the Pacific Islands.

The most popular social network service in Armenia is odnoklassniki.ru, a network service for classmates and old friends in Russia and in the former Soviet Union.

Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and re-

gion to connect and interact with other people. People can also add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profile to notify friends about themselves.

Facebook has a number of features. They include the Wall, a space on every user's profile page that allows friends to post messages for the user to see, Pokes, which allows users to send a virtual "poke" to each other (a notification that tells a user that they have been poked),

Photos, where users can upload albums and photos, and Status, which allows users to inform their friends of their whereabouts and actions. A user's Wall is visible to anyone who is able to see

that user's profile, which depends on their privacy settings.

<http://www.facebook.com>



### IRC RECEIVED ABOUT 100 NEW AMERICAN FILMS

The IRC recently received about 100 new DVDs to develop the American movie collection.

The titles represent classic Hollywood films, and award winning movies of past and present. Most of the titles will be screened either at the Embassy or in American Corners. Universities and NGOs can apply to organize joint movie programs for students, English language audiences and NGO volunteers. The Embassy Yerevan Public Affairs Office staff can assist in bringing

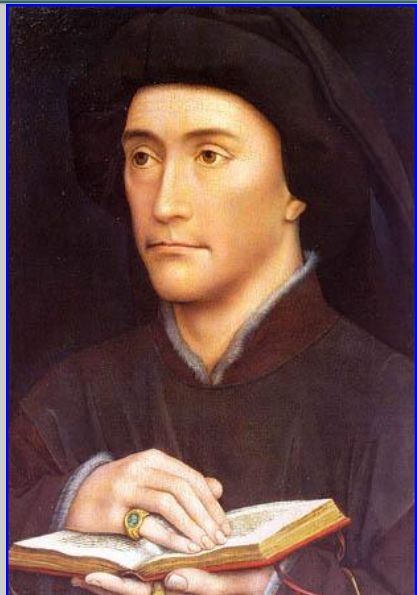
an American diplomat to lead a movie discussion program for academic institutions in Armenia.

### MONDAY MOVIES AT THE INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER

As part of its movie series, an English-language movie is shown at the U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center every third Monday of the month. A 30 minute English-language discussion follows each movie. Upcoming movies will be shown on January 26 and February 23 at 14:30pm.

Please contact:

[ircyerevan@usa.am](mailto:ircyerevan@usa.am) if you plan to attend the movie series.



Portrait of a Man Holding a Book, artist Rogier van der Weyden, (1399/1400 – June 18, 1464)

## EDUCATORS CALENDAR 2009

There's something worth commemorating every day. Find fun and educationally relevant holidays, events, and celebrations for each day. Visit at: <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/>



*National Book Month*

*National Thank-You Month*

*Hot Tea Month*

1 - New Year's Day

5 - National Bird Day

6-Telegraph First Demonstrated (1838)

7-Jupiter's Moons Discovered (1610)

12-First Public Museum Opened in SC (1773)

17-First Baby Born in White House (1806)

18-World Religions Day

19-Martin Luther King Day

20-Reagan Became Oldest President (1981)

21-First Atomic Submarine Launched (1954)

23-Earthquake Killed 830,000 in China (1556)

24-California Gold Rush Began (1848)

26-Chinese New Year

27-Vietnam War Peace Accords Signed (1973)

28-Challenger Shuttle Exploded (1986)

31-Thirteenth Amendment Abolished Slavery (1865)



*American Heart Month*

*Black History Month*

*Library Lovers' Month*

1-First U.S. Supreme Court Convened (1790)

2-Groundhog Day

2-7 National School Counseling

Week

4-First U.S. Presidential Election (1789)

Rosa Parks's Birthday (1913)

7-Love Your Robot Day

8-NASDAQ Debuted (1971)

9-Hershey's® Chocolate Founded (1894)

10-Umbrella Day

12-Abraham Lincoln's Birthday (1809)

13-First Public School Founded in U.S. (1635)

14-Valentine's Day

16-Presidents' Day

17-National PTA Founders Day

18-The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Published (1885)

20-Metropolitan Museum of Art Opened in NYC (1872)

21-Malcolm X Assassinated (1965)

23-First Animal Cloning (1997)

24-Mardi Gras

## English Learners Corner

### English Language Corpora Online Resources

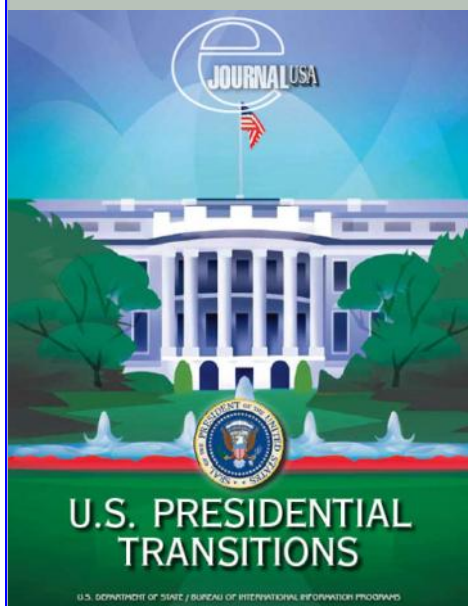
There are several corpora resources on the Internet that English language learners can search and analyze. Although some sites require a subscription for unlimited access to their corpus, many offer a limited search at no cost. The corpora are most useful if students learn the different options that allow them to narrow and focus their searches, which include codes and queries to search for language items by part of speech, speech event, and speaker, among other categories. The three sites described below are examples of online corpora that contain a wide variety of language data from diverse texts and numerous contexts.

1. The *Collins WordbanksOnline English* corpus currently holds about 56 million words from written and spoken texts, including newspapers, books, magazines, websites, and TV and radio shows. Searchers can specify American or British texts, and 40 lines of results are available as a free demonstration. Information on how to access and search the corpus is available at: [www.collins.co.uk/corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx](http://www.collins.co.uk/corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx)
2. The British National Corpus (BNC) contains 100 million words taken mostly from British written English, newspapers, magazines, academic texts, school essays, and fiction; it also includes spoken texts from business and government conversations, as well as radio shows. Fifty lines of results are available for free as a demonstration. Information on how to access and search the corpus is available at: [www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk](http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk)
3. The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) currently holds over 1.8 million spoken words as they are used in a large university settings, including language spoken by faculty and staff, and by students with various English proficiency levels and native languages. Information on how to access and search the corpus at no cost is available at: <http://lw.lsa.umich.edu/eli/micase/index.htm>



Read more about this subject: *Using Guided, Corpus-Aided Discovery to Generate Active Learning* by Li-Shih Huang //English teaching Forum, Vol.46, No.4, pages 20-27. The magazine is available in the IRC and American Corners.

## EJOURNAL USA: "U.S. Presidential Transitions"



The January 2009 edition of eJournal USA, "U.S. Presidential Transitions," discusses various aspects of the transfer of power from one American president to the next. The focus is on the process, not this specific transition.

We often read or hear about turmoil before, during, or after elections around the world. An important characteristic of democracy in the United States, however, is the regularly recurring peaceful transfer of power from one president to the next. Americans know when the next presidential election will take place – the Tuesday after the first Monday in November every four years. And power will be transferred to the newly elected (or re-elected) president on January 20 of the following year.

### Highlights:

- "A Checklist for New Presidents," by Stephen Hess of the Brookings Institution
- "Governing is Different From Campaigning," an interview with former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley
- "Personnel is Policy," an interview with Stuart Holliday of Meridian International Center and A member of the George W. Bush's transition team
- "Early Challenges for a New Administration," by Kurt Campbell of the Center for a New American Security
- "The President and the Press," by Martha Kumar of Towson University in Towson, Maryland
- "For the Record," by Terry Good, retired director of the White House Office of Records Management
- "Second-Term Transitions," by John Burke of the University of Vermont
- Special features include a photo gallery of "Inaugurations of the Past," FAQs, and "Did You Know?"
- A listing of additional resources

The URL for the journal is

<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0109.html>

The journal will be translated into Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Russian.



America.Gov language transition resources available in Russian: <http://www.america.gov/ru/uspolitics/elections/index.html>

The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 13:00 to 18:00.  
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